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BROWN BAG DISCUSSION: CPD'S ASD INTERDISCIPLINARY CLINIC

September 29, 2011 by cpehrson



"This is the place we should be doing this," claimed one of the presenters at this month's CPD Brown Bag discussion.

He was talking about the new ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) Clinic that opened at the CPD earlier this year.

Dr. Martin Toohill, along with fellow clinicians George Wooten, Janel Preston, and Vicki Simonsmeier, shared with an interested audience how the concept of developing an interdisciplinary team at the CPD evolved out of a brainstorming session during a URLEND training project.

"The idea of working in (medical) 'teams' is a relatively new concept in Western practices," Wooten told CPD staff. "What better place in Cache Valley to do this than here at the CPD where we have all the disciplines represented."

The purpose of the ASD Clinic is to provide one place where parents can bring their child when they suspect signs of autistic behaviors and receive a diagnosis that denies or confirms their feelings...and do this in as efficient and thorough a way as possible.

Because autism encompasses a broad spectrum of symptoms, a single brief evaluation cannot predict a child's true abilities or diagnosis. The Clinic offers a best-practices interdisciplinary, one-stop, unified approach. The team consists of a pediatrician, a psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, an occupational therapist, an audiologist, and a care coordinator, all of whom are part of the CPD family.

Early intervention care coordinator, Janel Preston, said that the greatest complaint she hears from parents is that, during their child's initial diagnosis, they had to 'go around to see twenty different people, answer the same questions over and over again, and do this all in the same building.'

The ASD Clinic will eliminate those problems which will lessen the stress on parents and give the child a more thorough evaluation. Along with the interdisciplinary diagnosis, parents will receive recommendations for treatment and intervention options.

The presenters were very excited and optimistic for the future of the ASD Clinic. The next hurdle is to make it financially viable, and then "there is no limit to the direction this service can go!"